WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method of managing documents related to a patent application, said method comprising:

    generating an invention disclosure from a first client system coupled to a server system over a first communication network, wherein said first client system is associated with a first technology developer;

    storing said generated invention disclosure in a database accessible to said server system;

    drafting a patent application for said invention disclosure from a second client system coupled to said server system over a second communication network, wherein said second client system is associated with a patent practitioner;

    storing said drafted patent application in said database;

    generating an instruction to file said patent application from a client system associated with either said technology developer or said patent practitioner; and

    receiving said instruction at said server system and causing said patent application to be filed in a patent office.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein said patent application is filed in said patent office electronically.

3.   The method of claim 1 wherein said patent application is printed on a printer coupled to said server system and filed in said patent office by mail.

4.   The method of claim 1 wherein said first and second communication systems are the public Internet.

5.   The method of claim 4 wherein said patent application is filed with a correspondence mailing address set to an address associated with said server system.

6.   The method of claim 5 further comprising, receiving from said patent office, paper correspondence related to said patent application that is mailed to said server system address, scanning said paper correspondence to create a scanned, electronic copy of said correspondence and storing said scanned, electronic copy of said correspondence in said database.

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1   7.   The method of claim 6 wherein said scanned, electronic copy of
2   said correspondence is viewable by said first and second client system over the Internet.

1   8.   The method of claim 1 wherein said invention disclosure is
2   generated by said first client system by responding to questions related to the invention
3   presented to said first client system by said server system via a Web page.

1   9.   The method of claim 4 wherein documents and data associated
2   with said patent application are stored in a Case Data Unit and viewable over the
3   Internet to said first and second client systems as determined by an access management
4   portion of said server system.

1   10.   A method of managing documents related to a plurality of patent
2   applications, said method comprising:
3   storing a first plurality of electronic documents associated with a first
4   plurality of patent applications assigned to a first technology developer in a database
5   accessible to a server system;
6   storing a second plurality electronic documents associated with a second
7   plurality of patent applications assigned to a second technology developer in a database
8   accessible to said server system;
9   assigning access rights to each one of a first plurality of client systems
10   associated with said first technology developer and a second plurality of client system
11   associated with said second technology developer, wherein said access rights allow said
12   first plurality of client systems to perform selected operations on said first plurality of
13   electronic documents and prevent said first plurality of client systems from viewing
14   said second plurality of electronic documents and wherein said access rights allow said
15   second plurality of client systems to perform selected operations on said second
16   plurality of electronic documents and prevent said second plurality of client systems
17   from viewing said first plurality of electronic documents;
18   storing said assigned access rights in said database;
19   enforcing said access rights with a document access management system
20   executing on said server system;
21   allowing selected client systems from said first and second plurality of
22   client systems to create first and second pluralities of invention disclosures,

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23 respectively, that are stored in said database as part of said first and second plurality of

24 electronic documents, respectively;

25   allowing selected client systems from said first plurality of client

26 systems to create a first plurality of patent applications from said first plurality of

27 invention disclosures, allowing selected client systems from said second plurality of

28 client systems to create a second plurality of patent applications from second plurality

29 of invention disclosures;

30   storing said first and second plurality of patent applications in said

31 database;

32   allowing selected client systems from said first plurality of client

33 systems to generate a first signal indicating an intent to file one of said first plurality of

34 patent applications in a first patent office and allowing selected clients systems from

35 said second plurality of client systems to generate a second signal indicating an intent

36 to file one of said second plurality of patent applications in a second patent office; and

37   in response to said first signal, causing said first patent application to be

38 filed in said first patent office and in response to said second signal, causing said

39 second patent application to be filed in said second patent office.

1   11.   The method of claim 10 wherein said first patent application is

2 filed electronically in response to receipt of said first signal.

1   12.   The method of claim 10 wherein said second patent applications

2 is printed on a printer coupled to said server system and subsequently filed in said

3 second patent office by mail.

1   13.   The method of claim 11 wherein said first and second plurality

2 of electronic documents each include scanned versions of papers sent from a patent

3 office.

1   14.   The method of claim 10 wherein said first plurality of client

2 systems includes one or more clients systems associated with a first patent practitioner

3 that represents said first technology developer.

1   15.   The method of claim 14 wherein said second plurality of client

2 systems includes one or more clients systems associated with a second patent

3 practitioner that represents said second technology developer.

1   16.   A server system for managing intellectual property; said system

2   comprising:

3   a processor;

4   a database having a first plurality of documents associated with a first

5   patent application assigned to a first applicant and a second plurality of documents

6   associated with a second patent application assigned to a second patent applicant

7   different from said first patent applicant;

8   a computer-readable memory for storing a computer program, wherein

9   said processor is operative with said computer program to:

10   control access rights to said first and second pluralities of

11   documents by (i) allowing a first client system coupled to said server system

12   over a public network and a second client system coupled to said server system

13   over a public network to access documents in said first plurality of documents

14   while prohibiting said first and second client systems from accessing documents

15   in said second plurality of documents and (ii) allowing a third client system

16   coupled to said server system through a public network and a fourth client

17   system coupled to said server system through a public network to access

18   documents in said second plurality of documents while prohibiting said third

19   and fourth client systems from accessing documents in said first plurality of

20   documents; and

21   receive a first signal from either said first or second client system

22   to file said first patent application in a patent office and receive a second signal

23   from either said third or fourth client system to file said second patent

24   application in a patent office;

25   wherein said first client system is associated with said first patent

26   applicant, said second client system is associated with a first law firm that

27   represents said first patent applicant, said third client system is associated with

28   said second patent applicant and said fourth client system is associated with a

29   second law firm that represents said second patent applicant.

1   17.   The server system of claim 16 wherein said first and second

2   plurality of documents each include scanned versions of papers sent from a patent

3   office.

1   18.   The server system of claim 17 wherein said scanned papers
2   include papers selected from the group consisting of: office actions, filing receipts,
3   signed PTO-1449 forms, stamped postcards, notices of allowance, advisory actions and
4   restriction requirements.

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